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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 000188

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SUBJECT: ADMIRAL KEATING'S JANUARY 14 MEETING WITH FM YANG  
JIECHI: MILITARY EXCHANGES, TAIWAN, BILATERAL RELATIONS

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson.  
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

#### Summary

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¶1. (C) U.S.-China bilateral and military-to-military relations were strengthened in 2007, in part due to frequent high-level exchanges, FM Yang Jiechi told visiting PACOM Commander Timothy Keating on January 14. FM Yang said he hoped the U.S. presidential election would not affect bilateral ties. Taiwan remains the most sensitive issue in U.S.-China relations, as (Taiwan President) Chen Shui-bian continues to push the referendum on Taiwan's membership in the UN, which is "another grave step" on the road to de jure independence. While expressing appreciation for Washington's opposition to Taiwan's UN referendum, FM Yang warned against sending "wrong signals," such as U.S. weapon sales, which "embolden" the Taiwan separatist movement. ADM Keating, accompanied by the Ambassador, said improving the quantity and quality of bilateral military exchanges is an important objective of his trip. Possibilities include exchanges between senior enlisted personnel and between mid-grade officers, PLA participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises, and visits from mid-grade PLA officers to U.S. professional military education institutions beyond West Point. ADM Keating emphasized the importance of U.S. Navy ship visits and said he hoped the USS Blue Ridge's request to visit Hong Kong will receive favorable consideration. The Admiral outlined other areas of bilateral mil-mil cooperation, including work on humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and response to infectious disease pandemics. ADM Keating thanked FM Yang for China's assistance to a U.S. team charged with accounting for U.S. servicemen killed during WWII in China. FM Yang pledged "full" MFA and PLA support for the team's visit, declaring that China will "never forget" the sacrifice of U.S. soldiers in China during WWII. End Summary.

#### Overview of Bilateral Relationship, Mil-Mil Ties

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¶2. (C) Extending a warm welcome to visiting PACOM Commander Timothy Keating, FM Yang Jiechi on January 14 said the Admiral's visit to Beijing so early in the new year demonstrates the importance the U.S. military places on relations with the PRC. The United States and China are both "stakeholders" and "constructive partners" who witnessed a strengthening of bilateral and military-to-military relations in 2007, in part due to such frequent high-level exchanges, FM Yang asserted. Noting that this was his second visit to China as PACOM Commander and fourth overall, ADM Keating said 2008 will be an important year, particularly for China as it

prepares for the Olympic Games in August. U.S.-China relations are extremely important for the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region. Although many countries in the area share common interests, few are as powerful or have as significant a military presence in the theater as the United States and China. We therefore should engage in a candid discussion of issues so as to develop relations and enhance mutual understanding, ADM Keating stated.

13. (C) As great powers and permanent members of the UN Security Council, the United States and China bear a heavy responsibility for the peace, stability and development of the Asia-Pacific region, FM Yang asserted. Washington and Beijing are increasingly engaged in important cooperation on a range of issues to include the Six-Party Talks, climate change, alternative energy sources, nonproliferation and counterterrorism. We should continue to expand the areas in which our interests converge while appropriately solving disputes, so as to further develop our cooperative and constructive bilateral relations in 2008, which serves not only the interests of our two peoples but also contributes to the security and development of the entire world. Noting that he has been dealing with U.S.-China relations for several decades and has met several PACOM Commanders previously, FM Yang said PACOM and the Chinese Government need to understand one another, given that PACOM's military personnel are the closest to China geographically. Turning to the American presidential election, FM Yang said that, no matter what happens in the United States during the campaign, Beijing hopes that U.S.-China relations will not be affected and instead will remain stable and continue to improve.

Taiwan

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14. (C) Taiwan remains the most sensitive issue in U.S.-China relations, FM Yang declared, warning that the "Chen Shui-bian authorities" are sparing no effort to push the "so-called referendum on membership in the UN," which he called "another grave step" on the road to de jure independence that has caused the cross-Straits situation to enter a "period of great danger." China is doing "everything possible" to strive for peaceful reunification, but it will not tolerate Taiwan independence nor allow anyone to separate Taiwan from China via any means or under any name. FM Yang expressed "appreciation" for Washington's commitment to its one China policy and the three Joint Communiqués, as well as U.S. opposition to Taiwan independence, Taiwan's joining the UN and the referendum on UN membership. It is "crucial" that we jointly strive to "forestall" Chen Shui-bian's referendum and other Taiwan independence activities. Such cooperation furthers our two countries' interests and is important to cross-Straits stability and regional security. China urges the United States to stop advanced weaponry sales to Taiwan, which send a "wrong signal" and "embolden" the Taiwan separatist movement, FM Yang claimed, reiterating that Taiwan is the key to the "healthy development" of stable U.S.-China relations. ADM Keating replied by emphasizing the longstanding U.S. commitment to cross-Straits stability. Noting that heated rhetoric often occurs during an election campaign, ADM Keating stated that PACOM will continue to pay close attention to developments in Taiwan and elsewhere and will do all it can to preserve peace and security in the region.

Strengthening Military Exchanges

15. (C) ADM Keating said that promoting a range of exchanges between our two militaries is an important objective of his visit and described the following as possibilities: exchanges between senior enlisted personnel and between mid-grade officers; PLA participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises; and visits from mid-grade PLA

officers to U.S. professional military education institutions beyond just West Point, to include the Naval and Air Force Academies as well as the Army, Navy and Air Force War Colleges. The U.S. military hopes to improve both the quantity and quality of our military exchanges, with the end goal being to enhance regional security and stability, ADM Keating stated.

¶6. (C) We should strengthen U.S.-China mil-mil exchanges at all levels and in all fields, especially between our two militaries' educational institutions, FM Yang replied, stating that the Ministry of Defense would "seriously study" ADM Keating's proposals and provide a reply "as soon as possible." In addition to mil-mil exchanges, China is ready to engage on a number of other high-level exchanges with the United States in 2008. For example, Beijing hopes that the National People's Congress (NPC) and the U.S. Congress can maintain frequent contact. Defense Secretary Gates' visit to China last year was a success, with the two sides agreeing to establish a defense hotline and to cooperate on our military archives, FM Yang said.

#### Ship Visits

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¶7. (C) U.S. Navy ship visits to China are crucial to developing understanding between our two countries and militaries, ADM Keating emphasized. Noting that he would travel to Hong Kong later on this trip, ADM Keating remarked how he last visited there on board the USS Kitty Hawk in ¶1999. The Admiral informed FM Yang that the USS Blue Ridge has submitted a request to visit Hong Kong later this month and expressed hope that the request will receive favorable consideration. In reply, FM Yang said China "follows procedure" regarding the visit of U.S. aircraft and ships to Hong Kong and stated that China is "willing to stay in touch" regarding such visits.

#### Tourists

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¶8. (C) Continuing on the theme of bilateral exchanges, FM Yang said he hoped to see an increase in the number of Chinese visitors to Hawaii, now that our two sides have agreed upon the United States as an "approved destination"

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for PRC tourists. On previous trips to Hawaii, FM Yang said he had seen few Chinese tourists, something he hopes will change in light of the new agreement. Perhaps someday PACOM officers will be able to practice their Chinese language skills with visiting PRC tourists just as easily as they can use Japanese and Korean with international visitors now.

#### Humanitarian Aid, Disaster Relief, Personnel Accounting

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¶9. (C) Cooperation between the United States and Chinese militaries extends beyond personnel exchanges and includes work in the fields of humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and response to infectious disease pandemics, ADM Keating said. ADM Keating thanked FM Yang for China's support for a visiting U.S. personnel accounting team that will work on locating remains of U.S. servicemen killed in China during WWII. FM Yang expressed agreement on bilateral military cooperation in all these areas. He said China places great importance on the personnel accounting team's visit and pledged the PLA and MFA's "full support." Our two countries fought shoulder to shoulder during WWII, and China will never forget the great efforts and sacrifice of U.S. soldiers in the struggle against Fascism, FM Yang stated.

#### Changing International Landscape

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¶10. (C) Reflecting on the profound changes of the 60 years

since the end of WWII, ADM Keating said it is PACOM's objective to make the next 60 years even more stable and prosperous. Enhancing our cooperation with China is an important step in this regard. FM Yang agreed that the changes of the last half century have been striking. One example is the visit of Indian Prime Minister Singh, who is on his first trip to China as Prime Minister and is scheduled to meet with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. In late December, Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda visited China, agreeing to strengthen relations of mutual benefit, while at the same time pledging to simultaneously "take history as a mirror" and "focus on the future." President Hu Jintao plans to travel to Japan in 2008. Meanwhile, UK Prime Minister Brown will visit China in January. Calling ADM Keating's visit "a highlight of 2008," FM Yang expressed confidence that it will serve to advance our mil-mil and bilateral relations.

¶11. (U) The delegation did not have the opportunity to clear this message.

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